THE CITY OF YPSILANTI NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER 2021

FROM THE DESK OF THE CITY MANAGER



Greetings from the City Manager's Office! It's that time of year again when the days get shorter, and temperatures start to drop rapidly. Don't forgot to set your clocks back on November 7th for daylight savings time. I hope everyone had a wonderful Halloween and participated in many of the events happening around the community.

As mentioned in last month's newsletter, there will be a warming center opening on Monday, November 1st. The warming center is located at the Ypsilanti Freighthouse Monday-Thursday from 8 AM – 6 PM and will provide meals and transportation to an overnight shelter. We're very excited for this warming shelter to be available and will provide any additional resources in the area.



I also want to remind everyone that the COVID-19 pandemic remains a very serious threat in our community and the best way we can support one another is by getting vaccinated and following state and county guidance to reduce the spread of the virus. It is so important that we work together as a community to keep one another safe and if there is anyone out there who still needs a vaccination appointment and cannot find one please do not hesitate to reach out. City Hall has returned to normal business hours so please do not hesitate to stop in and know that we are here to help. I am wishing you all a beautiful and safe Autumn season.

BLACK LIVES MATTER MURAL





I am very happy to report that on Sunday October 16th the Black Lives Matter Mural at Riverside Park was restored. We are so thankful to the dozens of volunteers that came out to help support repainting the mural and standing up against racism in our community.

PEN DAM REMOVAL

City Council has voted to sunset the Pen Dam Public Engagement Committee Meeting following the completion of a set of focus groups aimed at hearing priorities from the public about removal and restoration planning. An upcoming Town Hall for Pen Dam will be scheduled in November following a report from Limnotech that will be used to submit information the final grant reporting for the Department of Natural Resources Fisheries Habitat Program.

Thanks to all those who participated in the engagement sessions over the last several weeks and to our partners on the project at the Huron River Watershed Council. For more information on the public engagement ad hoc committee, project updates, or upcoming meetings please visit our Pen Dam landing page.

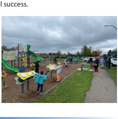
YCS PARTNERSHIP



It was with great honor and esteem that the City of Ypsilanti presented the Ypsilanti Community High School Alena Zachery-Ross with a check for $25,000 to benefit the historic sports program and the innovative arts programming in our community. In response the City accepted a "Key to the City" symbolizing the rich and prosperous potential of education and the treasures of opportunity it provides. It is in the support of athletics, the arts and academic scholarship that we gathered to celebrate the progress, resiliency and spirit of cooperation. May our efforts continue to celebrate our resiliency and contribute to the development of the youth of the Ypsilanti community.

PARKRIDGE COMMUNITY CENTER TRUNK OR TREAT EVENT

Saturday, October 30th, there was a Trunk-or-Treat event held at Parkridge Community Center from 1 PM- 4 PM. It was a great turnout, and we are happy for all who participated, even with the weather, which is far too familiar on Halloween weekends. Special thanks to all who attended and made this event an overall success.

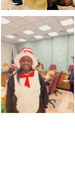




HALLOWEEN COSTUME CONTEST AT CITY HALL

On Friday, we held our first Halloween Costume party. The event was a success, with city staff sharing their creative sides—prizes for the best costume awarded to Jamaica Barry & Joe Meyers. In addition, Scott Slagor received an award for his strenuous efforts noticed within the city of Ypsilanti. We're grateful to all those who participated. All the steps to make this event a success is greatly appreciated, and we hope to keep the tradition going in the future.









WALK.BIKE.DRIVE - TRAFFIC SAFETY EDUCATION CAMPAIGN UNTIL NOV. 11

From October 29 to November 11, 2021, local governments throughout Southeast Michigan will promote traffic safety via the Walk.Bike.Drive. Safe campaign. Walk.Bike.Drive. Safe was developed by SEMCOG with the input and guidance of the Southeast Michigan Road Safety Implementation team and other traffic safety partners, to implement the Southeast Michigan Traffic Safety Plan. This campaign is data-driven, focusing on many of the emphasis areas illustrated in SEMCOG's new Quick Facts reporting the 2020 traffic crashes and statics in the region.

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

We started our Meeting Highlights, which covers topics mentioned at our City Council meetings. Those who are interested can view it on our City youtube page.

The next Ypsilanti City Council is on November 2, 2021. The meeting will start at 7 PM via Zoom Platform. Please reference the link below:
Zoom Link
When prompted, enter Meeting ID: 879 2062 6599
November 2, 2021, City Council Regular Meeting Toll Free Phone Number Access
888 475 4499 US Toll-free
877 853 5257 US Toll-free
-When prompted, enter the Meeting ID: 879 2062 6599, followed by the #, press # again to be connected

I-94 EXPRESSWAY PROJECT

Pedestrians and bicyclists in the Ypsilanti area will soon have a much easier time getting across I-94 thanks to a pair of trail-related projects that are now in the works. One of these endeavors involves modifying a freeway interchange at Grove Road, while the other aims at improving an existing crossing over the expressway at Huron Street.

Bonnie Wessler, a project manager with the city of Ypsilanti's Department of Public Services, believes both projects are important from a safety standpoint, as both areas already see frequent use by pedestrians and other non-motorized travelers.

"These are projects that are small in terms of distance, but they're really impactful as far as their scope, because there's no way you can just casually walk over I-94," she says. "You have to take a bridge."

Long advocated by state Rep. Ronnie Peterson, the Grove Road project is a collaboration between the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT), Wayne County Parks and Recreation (WCPR), and the city of Ypsilanti. Construction on the improvement, which has already begun, is intended to ease travel for non-motorists on a section of Grove over I-94, a little south of Depot Town. The work there involves removing a sidewalk on an existing bridge and widening it to an eight- to 10-foot path. Ramps have also been added at the beginning and end of the bridge to make the journey more accessible for people who might be using wheelchairs or similar devices.

In addition to making the area more accessible for non-motorists, the Grove Road project will also serve as an important connection on the Border-to-Border Trail, a 35-mile trail that will ultimately span Washtenaw County to the borders of Wayne and Livingston counties. Construction on the Grove Road overpass is expected to wrap up very soon. Fencing will be added to the site next spring.

Work on the expressway at Huron Street has not yet started. That project is being spearheaded by the city of Ypsilanti with support from MDOT, WCPR, and Ypsilanti Township. It will involve reconfiguring an existing crossing at the border of the city and the township to make it more accessible. To that end, the outside southbound lane of the overpass there will be converted into a non-motorized path.

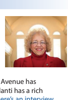
Construction there is expected to take place next year as part of a larger road diet that will also be taking place on Hamilton Street and Washtenaw Avenue. Bicycle lanes will also be established on all three roadways, which will link up with existing bike lanes on West Cross Street and offer access to the Border-to-Border trail via Riverside Park.

THANK YOU TROOP 40733



Lastly, we want to recognize Girl Scout Troop: 40733 who placed a little food pantry in front of the Fire Station. The food pantry is for people to drop off some non-perishable food items or take if needed. Thanks so much for your service and generous idea!

FROM THE DESK OF MAYOR LOIS ALLEN RICHARDSON



It seems Time has passed swiftly this Fall and now we are already thinking of the winter holidays. November is a popular month to recognize important causes affecting many of user those we know. It's National Diabetes Awareness Month, Child Safety Protection Month, National Caregivers Appreciation Month, National Peanut Butter Lovers Month, and World Vegan Month.

Especially significant is that November is Native American Heritage Month. The 2019 census shows that over 1,500 Native Americans live in Washtenaw County. Michigan Avenue has historically linked Detroit and Chicago, but it was originally known as Sauk Trail. Ypsilanti has a rich history of Native Americans that would enrich us to learn more. As a starting point, here's an interview with our local historian Matthew Siegfried. We owe much to our original inhabitants.

November is also National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness week (hhweek.org). November 13-21 is a time for us to be mindful of the trauma endured by our citizens who are food and housing insecure. It takes much effort for them to meet their basic human needs and they need all the support we can share. In too many cases, children are involved as well. Our county is fortunate to have a dense network of both public and private providers working to end homelessness through building and securing affordable housing, sheltering, and supporting those who do not have it, and working to prevent houselessness and hunger among all vulnerable people. Let's be mindful of the workers tireless, loving. and often thankless efforts by donating kindly whatever we can afford.

We will also observe Veterans' Day on November 11. About 19 million living Americans served in the Armed Forces, often giving their country some of the best years of their lives. Fewer Americans have military experience than in recent generations and the number is declining further. It is even more important to show our gratitude to those who responded to the call to protect and defend.

We have so much to be thankful for this November. In the past 18 months, COVID has infected more than ten percent our city (confirmed cases). Fortunately, far fewer have died, but long term recovery is of concern. We are also concerned about the infection of increasingly younger age groups and deaths among them. Health officials, providers, and civic leaders have stood together to help the most vulnerable get health care, vaccines, and information. Let us continue to stand together as we face the challenges ahead, the next ones around the corner that rise up to meet us, demanding we do better and do more.

This November, let us celebrate our collective wins and lift up those who are striving to make a difference, let us re-commit to the work and promise that lies ahead. This season in our history will continue to test us so, be strong and of good courage with thankful hearts and minds.The City of Ypsilanti has a long storied history of its diverse communities showing the way to make things better. As a long time daughter of this City, I have seen it countless times.

The holiday that most Americans celebrate together is Thanksgiving Day. I hope this year we will pause to be grateful for such instances of commonality we can share with others, and try in the rest of the year to work toward more unity in our communities. It is especially important that we do whatever we can to donate time, resources, and love to someone in need. Along with your traditional charities, please remember our wonderful nonprofits that are doing so much locally to reduce hunger and food insecurity. May your table be rich with delicious food and surrounded by loved ones.
Happy Thanksgiving!

LOVE is the answer,
Mayor Lois

OTHER CITY UPDATES

BOARDS & COMMISSIONS VACANCIES

Arts Commission
Commissioner
Two Youth Members

Dangerous Bldgs
Dangerous Buildings Officer

Human Relations Commission
Commissioner
Two Youth Members

Planning Commission
Commissioner

Parks & Recreation Commission
Two Commissioners
Three Youth Members

Police Advisory Commission
Commissioner
Two Youth Members

Sustainability Commission
Commissioner
Two Youth Members

YDDA
Board Member

Zoning Board of Appeals
Two Commissioners

Fill out this online form if you are interested in the City of Ypsilanti Boards and Commissions.

RECYCLING WIZARD

WRRMA Waste Wizard - an interactive recycling search tool!
Type the name of a waste material, and the wizard will tell you where it goes for recycling, composting or disposal. Pretty neat huh?
Find it on our recycling page!



PENINSULAR DAM REMOVAL UPDATE

Though the fall colors are coming later due to the relatively warm wet weather, it has been a beautiful autumn to be on the Huron River in Ypsilanti. Council member Brian Jones-Chance, Board of Education member/Restoration Committee Chair Maria Goodrich, and I took advantage of a light rain on a Sunday morning to paddle both upstream and downstream from the dam at Peninsular Park, observing very different conditions on these two stretches including several Osprey just downstream from LaForge Road. These different conditions were part of the conversations during the three public focus group meetings held in August and September. Input from those meetings is being synthesized into a report by our excellent facilitator, Sommer Woods of Woods and Watts Effect. The intent was to release that report with other reports from the sediment and bridge engineering studies ahead of a townhall meeting to discuss those results.
On the technical side of this project, the contractor, Limnotech, reports good progress has been made but final reports have not been issued.

- Interfluve (a LimnoTech subcontractor) has completed all the field survey work.
- LimnoTech has developed maps of the depth of the existing sediment buildup (from water surface) and the maps of the depth of refusal measurements (thickness of sediment) for the impoundment.
- Interfluve is working to complete their Technical Memorandum to document the surveys, and to provide a geomorphologic assessment of the restored reach of the river based on the geomorphology of analog sites. They will be delivering this memorandum to LimnoTech soon. This will help inform how the river channel will change in the future.
- AECOM (another LimnoTech subcontractor) has completed the model development and the existing conditions modeling. They are currently coordinating with Interfluve on the channel dimensions/alignment to use for a proposed conditions model. We expect this work will be completed in the coming weeks.
- Weather conditions, particularly rain and higher-than-normal flows in the river during the past several weeks, has made sediment quality sampling more challenging. Combined with other logistical and equipment delays, such as safe access to the impoundment and clearance under the bridges, has delayed this part of the project. Access has been secured to different sections of the river and Affiliated Researchers (the subcontractor responsible for the sediment sampling) will be deploying with contingencies soon. This is the element that will give us updated information about the condition and contents of the sediment in the impoundment.

Considering the last point, the Pen Dam Public Engagement Committee agreed the chemical profile analysis of the sediments was significant enough to postpone the townhall until the results of that analysis could be shared. We have been assured by Limnotech that the sampling and analysis will be completed by the end of the year. Our partners at the Huron River Watershed, technical leads on the project, obtained an extension from the DNR until January to finish this grant funded work. So, while we have not set a date for the townhall meeting, we plan to share Sommer's report, the Limnotech report, and the Restoration Plan ahead of the meeting to allow sufficient time for review by residents and other stakeholders. These reports also will inform the request for proposals (RFP) for engineering firms to perform the next phase of the planning studies for 2022. The Huron River Watershed Council has already been awarded funding from the DNR for the second phase studies.

I would like to thank the Huron River Watershed Council, the Pen Dam Removal Public Engagement Committee, and city staff for their work on this project. For more information and updates, you can access Ypsilanti's Pen Dam Landing page here.

Steve Wilcoxen
City Council, Ward 2

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICES NEWS



Fall has arrived and soon we will be cleaning up fall leaves. In some instances, this yard waste can be as much as 50 percent of the solid waste generated by the household during the fall months. Before you get out the rake and the blower, we want to highlight some potential alternatives to blowing, raking, bagging, and dragging those leaves to the curb. These a lternatives are mulching or composting at home.

If you prefer to handle the leaves with as little effort as possible you should consider mulching. There are several advantages to mulching, according to Michigan State University Extension. The small decomposing leaf pieces provide nutrients for your lawn over the winter for quicker greening in the spring. They also cover any bare spots in the lawn that are good places for weed seeds to germinate. Michigan State University Extension has provided the following instructions for mulching your lawn:

"To mulch the leaves into your lawn, set your mower at its highest setting and mow as usual. Then mow again in the other direction, making a crisscross or ninety-degree pattern. There will be some leaf residue left on the lawn, but it will continue to break down and fall through the grass to reduce future weeds and provide those essential nutrients. After all, fall is the best time to feed your lawn. After several years, this mulching process can result in almost complete elimination of dandelions and crabgrass in some cases. If you start mulching as the first leaves begin to fall, you should only need to mow your lawn weekly. However, if a heavy wind occurs, it may require you to mulch the leaves more frequently. Leaves can be mulched up to approximately six inches deep and have good results depending on the type of lawn mower you are using."

Another option for leaf waste disposal is to use the mower to mulch and bag the leaves and use those leaves as mulch around flower beds, shrubs, trees, and vegetable gardens. The leaves will provide nutrients and reduce weeds in those areas.
Another option for leaf removal is composting. Michigan State University Extension has the following information about composting:

"Another option for leaf removal is composting. This also can be done using your lawn mower. Instead of mulching them back into the lawn, collect them in the mower bag and form a pile. Since there is probably still some lawn growth, you will get some grass clippings mixed in with the chopped up leaf debris. This is good. A good compost pile needs both carbon (leaves) and nitrogen (grass) for best decomposition. And because the leaves are chopped up into smaller pieces, they will decompose easier, giving you finished compost faster.
A compost pile can be just that; a pile in an easily accessible area away from buildings and fences. Or it can be as elaborate as a three bin compost bin system where the yard waste is turned into the next bin on a temperature-dependent cycle. With either option, finished compost will be the final result."

These alternative leaf management options will create less waste at the curb and help you improve your lawn or garden next spring. You may also save some money in the process. For more information please take a look at the following Michigan State University Extension article about this subject. Thank you and have a great fall everyone.

SNOW ORDINANCE AND ABATEMENT PROCEDURES

TO ALL CITY OF YPSILANTI PROPERTY OWNERS

The city's snow ordinance and abatement procedures go into effect November 26, 2021. Please be advised of the following:

1. Snow must be removed from sidewalks and parking lots within 24 hours of first accumulation of one inch (1") or more.
2. Ice must, if practicable, immediately be removed from sidewalks and parking lots. When immediate removal is impracticable, sand, salt or other chemical or materials must immediately be used and then ice must be removed as soon as practicable.
3. Only one (1) warning for abatement will be left at any parcel per snow season. Further violations will result in abatement without additional notices left at the property. The property owner/agent is responsible for abatement costs.
4. A citation will be issued for every violation, even the first. Fines increase each offense.
5. A five foot (5') path must be maintained on sidewalks at all times to be in compliance. (Properties with public sidewalks less than 5' in width must be cleared to the edges of the paved areas).

Ypsilanti City Code Chapter 94, Section 94-135(a) defines the "snow season" as October 1st through May 31st. Failure to comply with abatement notice will result in the city's contractor being hired to correct the violation, with all costs for services invoiced to the property owner/agent. Further information may be obtained through the Code Enforcement Division at (734) 482-9626, or at the code enforcement landing page.

RECYCLING DROP OFF EVENTS



FREE DROP OFF RECYCLING
14 W. Forest Ave.
All GLASS, STYROFOAM, & ASEPTIC CONTAINERS must be separated, clean and dry. Items which are normally accepted in curbside recycling (listed above) do not need to be separated, but they will need to be clean and dry.
This event is for CITY OF YPSILANTI RESIDENTS ONLY

10am-2pm November 20, 2021
December 18, 2021
January 29, 2022
February 26, 2022
March 26, 2022
April 30, 2022
May 21, 2022
June 25, 2022

TOYS FOR TOTS



The Fire Station and Police station now has a box from Toys for Tots in their lobby, and it will stay until the second week of December. Any donations will be appreciated. For any additional information, please use the link below. We would appreciate it if you could let everyone know all your support is greatly appreciated. More information HERE.

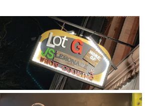
MAJOR NON-MOTORIZED IMPROVEMENTS ON THE HORIZON IN YPSILANTI

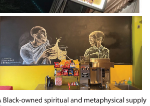
Huron, Hamilton and Washtenaw – In 2022, portions of these roads that fall under Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) control will see repaving along with pedestrian, disabled and bicycle improvements including sidewalk ramps, bike lanes, safety signage and traffic calming. This MDOT project will also address the need for a safe non-motorized crossing of Huron Street over the I-94 bridge.

Public input sessions on the Huron, Hamilton, Washtenaw project in mid-August at the Ypsilanti City Hall and Ypsilanti Township Civic Center. The Ypsilanti presentation was livestreamed by the City here, and the PowerPoint presentation is available here: MDOT presentation. Additional project information can be found HERE.

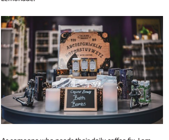
YPSILANTI DDA UPDATES

NEW BUSINESSES IN THE DDA





Lot G, the Home of JS Lemonade and Who's Cooking?" is one of the most exciting restaurants Downtown and a destination for those who love to try something new. The aptly named "Who's Cooking?" features a rotating set of chefs and local food gurus with a new menu each Saturday and Sunday. They already commonly sell out and each "secret chef" brings something new to the table each weekend. We love this amazing new concept Downtown in the former Beezy's Café location at 20 N Washington and we think you will too! Stop in and visit Wednesday-Saturday 11am-7pm or Sunday from Noon-5pm to find out who's cooking and try some of the weekday fare featuring fried chicken birria tacos and try some of the world-famous JS Lemonade.



A Black-owned spiritual and metaphysical supply shop is coming to Ypsilanti Oct. 29, just in time for Halloween. **The Conjure Goddess**, at 226 W. Michigan Avenue, offers a wide range of spiritual items specializing in the African spiritual practices of hoodoo and voodoo. The Conjure Goddess also carries items for other spiritual faiths including Wicca, Santeria, and Witchcraft. They will also have a wide range of herbs, crystals, statues, incense, sage, tarot decks, and spiritual books available. You can check out their products at: theconjuregoddess.net or visit between 10am-8pm Friday and Saturday.

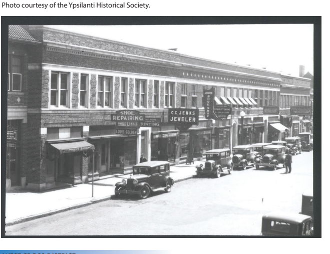
As someone who needs their daily coffee fix, I am very excited about **Bridge Community Cafe** opening Downtown on West Michigan Ave at the former B-24's. Bridge Community Cafe aspires to create a safe space for the community by providing coffee, food, and comfort. The business is managed by Noon, Sierra & María and they have an exciting vision for how they want to be part of the community. Bridge Community Café is quickly approaching a grand opening and you can find additional information and updates shared through their Facebook & Instagram accounts: bridgecommunitycafe.



YPSILANTI THROWBACK - *PRESERVATION PLANNER SCOTT SLAGOR*

Checkout this Throwback image of downtown! The first block of N Huron has had a diverse development history. The east side of the street once housed the Occidental Hotel and Mineral Baths, a 19th century health resort. Over time the hotel and its associated buildings were remodeled and, in some cases, removed. By the mid-1920s, all the Victorian era character of the block had been replaced by a series of two-story Colonial Revival commercial blocks that are extant today. The buildings all share commonalities, but if you look closely, they are not identical. Each features brick facades, decorative limestone embellishments, and a prominent cornice.

Photo courtesy of the Ypsilanti Historical Society.



WEST CROSS DISTRICT

On street parking has return to West Cross as the final touches on this construction project are being completed. Businesses on West Cross have been surveyed and the DDA has created a new grant program aimed at providing support to those affected by construction this summer.



Thanks to everyone who attended Casper on October 28. It was one of our best turnouts of the year and a great way to finish the DDA Movie Series in 2021. We also want to sincerely thank our sponsors of the movie series, Maiz Mexican Cantina who provided chips and salsa for free at every movie night and University of Michigan Credit Union for sponsoring the candy at our last two drive in movies on West Cross Street. Looking forward to doing this again in 2022!



HOLIDAY TIME IN THE DDA

The DDA is organizing a Holiday Storefront Competition throughout the districts and making a small budget available to businesses to help decorate. We will be holding a public poll and offering small prizes to the winning businesses with the best holiday storefronts.





The Depot Town Tree Lighting Ceremony will take place on November 28th and start with a holiday market organized by residents at 3pm. The event will feature great food, music, cookies, and end with Santa's arrival as the tree is lit up. This event annually draws hundreds if not thousands of attendees and will be better than ever in 2021 with plenty of new additions.

The Holiday Market at the Freighthouse continues December 18th and 19th and features 40 Ypsilanti based artisans including crafters from the south side of Ypsilanti, The Ladies Literary Club, quilt makers, jewelry makers, wood crafters, and clothing designers. We have a ton of amazing bakers, candy makers and dessert makers signed up too. The Food Co-op will be serving salads, sandwiches and soup in the Freight House Cafe and local restaurants will be staffed up to serve as many people as we can fit in Depot Town. The Ypsilanti High School choir will be performing at 11 am Saturday singing traditional holiday songs and multicultural folk songs. The Holmes Elementary School Blue Grizzlies jazz band will be performing at 2 pm Saturday. Eric Moore will be performing folk and traditional music both Saturday and Sunday. Kenny Simon has offered to provide background music with his dj set up and we have a photographer who is also a licensed drone pilot who will take pictures of the event and post them in real-time.



DDA FACADE GRANT UPDATES

Did you know the DDA has recently sponsored several new murals around the City? The most recent two are at 432 W Michigan Ave pictured first below. Then next is at 11 S Washington near the South Huron Parking Lot.



Letterpress Studio - Painted by Narooz Solimon



CW Creatyv is created this mural with Educate Youth for #ypsiGLOW. The DDA made funding available, and connected building owner Sim Sethi with YpsiGlow to create a beautiful artistic opportunity in Downtown Ypsilanti.

AROUND TOWN

RECENT EVENTS

Despite the weather, YpsiGlow was able to move their programming into the Ypsilanti Freighthouse. Check out the Under The Radar Michigan segment highlighting the event!

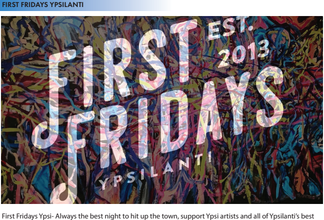




photo by @_mycoif

The third annual All Hallows Illumination of Frog Island brought the park to life on Monday, November 1st. Jack-o-lanterns lined the amplitheater, and folks enjoyed live entertainment from Ypsi Spin Jam, and Black Jake and the Carnies.

FIRST FRIDAYS YPSILANTI



First Fridays Ypsi- Always the best night to hit up the town, support Ypsi artists and all of Ypsilanti's best small businesses.

Its a self-guided art walk, and its FREE.

All FFY venues provide free events: art openings. live music. art workshops. performance arts. discounted prices and more!

This month we have 15 Ypsi busineses on our map for November 5th. Help us welcome our newest venues, The Conjure Goddess, and the Gallery at Stone & Spoon!

You can find the full list of events HERE.



Do you have something happening in the city you'd like to share here?
Email your article to tkoch@cityofypsilanti.com